

The Bees at Quex Park

I went to work at the Nursery at Quex Park when I was 15 years old and being young I got all the 'just' jobs - this was one of them. "Just go and do this" or "Just go and do that". Outside the nursery there was a workshop, where the carpenters, bricklayers, road repairers and odd job men went, one of whom was Steve. If there were no other jobs to do, they were sent round the estate clearing up.

On one occasion I was told to go over to the workshop to tell Steve he was to go to the bee garden next door to the workshop and hoe between the fruit trees. I walked into the bee garden with him, but he was in a real state by the time we got there, saying all sorts of things that I cannot repeat. He started knocking the fence with his hoe, because he didn't want to be in there. I started to walk away when I heard a loud 'bang'. I turned to see Steve knocking the bee hives with his hoe. Of course, the bees did not like it and they all flew out angrily - and all the other bees from the hives joined in. The bee garden was not the place to be just then - so I got out as quickly as I could.

Now it was at this point that the bees went up quite a way. It was like you sometimes see at the cinema. They circled round and formed an arrow and then headed back towards the bee garden - and Steve. They began to attack him as he kept striking about with his hat. At last he got out of the bee garden and the bees flew round and round for a bit and then went back to their hives. You would have thought that was the end of it, but - no - the following year it was a repeat performance. Steve was ordered to return to the bee garden to do the hoeing, but said he wouldn't go. The Manager ordered him to go, so after much grumbling he went. He started hoeing, with just a few bees flying around.

Steve breathed a sigh of relief, but he soon had to think again as out of the hives they came buzzing round him exactly as they'd done last year. And he knew what was coming as they formed up into the arrow shape. By this time, Steve was already heading out of the garden double quick and he managed to get outside the wall. This time the bees flew round and round until Steve was out of sight. After that, he wasn't asked to go back into the bee garden again - Steve now knew that it wasn't only elephants that don't forget - bees don't either!